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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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SUBJECT: Honey and Some of its Uses.....Information from the food specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Do you like myths and legends? Not long ago, I read a new one....new to me, at least. In Finland, legend has it that if a girl baked a honey cake on Christmas Eve...kept it in her bed overnight and then gave her sweetheart a slice of it, ~~hac~~ would remain true to her for life.

The little squib didn't say exactly how a girl is supposed to sleep with a cake in her bed. Nor did it tell how to get a sweetheart to eat the cake after it had been kicked around like that. But one thing was certain. She had to use a honey cake.

Now I can think of better uses for honey cake than sleeping with it. And I'll bet you can too. But the story did give me an idea. I don't know about your meals. Mine are beginning to taste winterish...to say the least. They need a bit of pepping up. I want some food to remind me of summer...of warm weather....flowersgreenery. And honey strikes me as being that kind of food.

The Home economists of the United States Department of Agriculture say we can use it in a number of different ways. And it's at its very best uncooked, with the natural flavor and color unchanged.

There are lots of ways to use uncooked honey besides pouring it on waffles and griddle cakes. Honey is an excellent sweetener for fruits, beverages or cereals. It's good in sandwiches, in sauces and in frozen desserts too.

Have you ever tried using honey instead of sugar to sweeten a fruit cocktail? It adds a delightful flavor. And it mixes beautifully. But here's one trick the home economists suggest. You know how thick honey can get if it stays in a cold

place? And when you try to pour a little out...you get too much, overwhelming the other flavors in your mixture? Well....to thin the honey down...warm it a little. Not over a hot stove. All you need to do is put the honey jar in a pan of hot water. Don't have the water on the fire...and not boiling hot either. Higher temperatures injure both the flavor and color of the honey.

That little trick of warm honey works nicely for any dish you want to flavor slightly with the sweet. Because you can pour warm honey more easily.

Another suggestion right here. For use in sweetening cereals or tea or some other beverage, maybe you'd like to add 5 percent water to enough honey to last you for a week or so. The mixture will keep that long quite well and it's much easier to use than full strength honey.

In a moment, I'm going to give a recipe for honey and orange sauce. It's good over ice cream or other desserts. But while you're getting something to write it down on...maybe you'd like a few tips on keeping honey.

Like any other sugar syrup, honey is likely to absorb moisture and it may ferment when it's left where moist air can get to it. So store your honey in a dry place, at ordinary room temperature and keep it in a tightly sealed container.

When you put honey in the refrigerator, you can expect it to become cloudy or even partially crystallized. But don't let that worry you. The honey from many nectar sources will crystallize as it gets older. And it'll liquify easily when it's warmed in hot water.

Now for that honey and orange sauce. Take a cup of honey...and combine it with a cup and a fourth of finely chopped fresh orange peel...a half cup of orange juice and an eighth of a teaspoon of salt. I'll run over those proportions again. It's one cup honey to a cup and a fourth chopped orange peel, a half cup of orange juice and an eighth teaspoon of salt. Put the mixture in a pan and let it stand over hot water.....without cooking...for about 30 minutes. Standing over hot water that long helps blend the flavors.

The nice part about this sauce is that you can keep it a while in the refrigerator.....and use it as you like. Keep it covered, of course. It's delicious over ice cream, plain cakes or puddings.

Honey combined with sandwich spreads makes a sure fire hit in the lunch box or at tea time or for light lunch. It's different. And it'll help fill the family's sweet tooth. What spreads? Well...peanut butter...for example. The two flavors are particularly good together. But honey's fine with chopped dried fruit, or cream cheese or cottage cheese or with chopped orange peel too. All these combinations make good sandwiches.

Those are just a few of the ways honey can be used. Nevertheless, they give a body a few ideas for pepping up the ole menus.....don't they. Remember how the children of Israel looked forward to Canaan as a land flowing with milk and honey? Even that far back...honey was considered something of a treat.

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